

# GENERAL INTERVIEW TIPS

## Do:

- Arrive 15 minutes early. Late attendance is never excusable.
- Clarify questions. Be sure you answered the questions the employer really asked.
- Get the interviewer to describe the position and responsibilities early in the conversation so you can relate your skills and background to the position throughout the interview.
- Give your qualifications. Stress the accomplishments that are most pertinent to the job.
- Conduct yourself professionally. Be aware of what your body language is saying. Smile, make eye contact, don't slouch and maintain composure.
- Anticipate tough questions. Prepare in advance so you can turn apparent weaknesses into strengths.
- Dress appropriately. Make your first impression a professional one.
- Ask questions throughout the interview. An interview should be a mutual exchange of information, not a one-sided conversation.
- Listen. This is probably the most important ability of all. By concentrating not only on the employer's words, but also on the tone of voice and body language, you will be able to pick up on the employer's style. Once you understand how a hiring authority thinks, pattern your answers accordingly and you will be able to better relate to him or her.

## Don't:

- Don't answer vague questions. Rather than answering questions you think you hear, get the employer to be more specific and then respond.
- Never interrupt the employer. If you don't have time to listen, neither does the employer.
- Don't smoke, chew gum or place anything on the employer's desk.
- Don't be overly familiar, even if the employer is doing all of these things.
- Don't wear heavy perfume or cologne.
- Don't ramble. Long answers often make the speaker sound apologetic or indecisive.
- On the other hand, don't answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible.
- Do not lie. Answer questions as truthfully as possible.
- Do not make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers or companies.

## Closing the Interview:

After you have finished your questions, you will probably hear a comment similar to, "Well, if you don't have anything else, that should be all for today. Thanks for coming." This is an opportune time to make a strong close by summarizing your qualifications and expressing your interest in the position.

Too many people second-guess themselves after an interview. By closing strongly and asking the right questions, you can eliminate the post-interview doubts that tend to plague most interviewees. If you feel that the interview went well and you would like to take the next step, express your interest to the hiring authority and turn the tables a bit.

*Try something like the following:*

"After hearing more about your company, the position and the responsibilities at hand, I am certain that I possess the qualities that you are looking for in the (title) position. Based on our conversation and my qualifications, are there any issues or concerns that you have that would lead you to believe otherwise?"

OR

"This sounds like an exciting opportunity – just the kind I am looking for. I believe my (insert your most relevant strengths and experience here) make me a good candidate for this position. I look forward to the next step in the selection process."

*You have a right to be assertive.* Asking if the interviewer has any concerns is a great closing question because it opens the door for the hiring authority to be honest with you about his or her feelings. If concerns do exist, this is a great opportunity to overcome them. You have one final chance to dispel the concerns, sell your strengths and end the interview on a positive note. A few things to remember during the closing process:

- Do not be discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with the office first, or interview other applicants, before making a decision.
- Make sure you answer the following two questions: "Why are you interested in the company?" and "What can you offer?"
- Express thanks for the interviewer's time and consideration.